

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small, glowing object, possibly a candle, against a dark background. The hand is positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the fingers slightly curled. A green square is located at the top center of the image. The overall mood is warm and inviting.

>Welcome!

you belong

Creative
Communications
sample

DEVOTIONS *for* **PARISH GUESTS**



Welcome! You Belong

WELCOME ONE ANOTHER, THEN, AS CHRIST
WELCOMED YOU, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

Romans 15:7

Welcome! We enter the church expecting to join believers in praising God. That is what happens, but God does much more for us! When we come to Mass, God welcomes us into his presence. He is ready to serve us, as any good host would be. He feeds us with his Word as we listen to the Scripture readings and sing the Psalms. He nourishes our faith with the body and blood of Jesus his Son in a holy meal of bread and wine. Are you worried that you have nothing suitable to wear? God takes care of that too. Through faith in Jesus, we are placed into a right relationship with God, who dresses us in the holiness of his Son. All dressed up and no place to go? Come to worship and enter the presence of God. It's an invitation like no other.



Scattered Seed

THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD.

Luke 8:11

We like to think that everyone is paying close attention in worship, and for the most part, those present are participating in what is being said and done. But our attention can wander, and there might be some daydreaming going on. We may have a little trouble gathering our thoughts, but what takes place in Mass is more like scattering, that is, like scattering seed. We listen to words from God in the Scripture readings. Those words are reflected in songs and explained in the sermon. The Word of God is scattered among us like a farmer scatters seed across a field. The Spirit of God is at work in that seed; he causes the seed of the Word to take root and grow in our lives. From those small seeds, a great harvest of faith will grow, to the glory of God!

**Lord God, help us as we worship to listen
and learn from your Word so that the precious seed
will take root and grow in our lives. Amen.**



Forgiven

IF WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND
JUST AND WILL FORGIVE OUR SINS AND CLEANSE US
FROM EVERY WRONGDOING.

1 John 1:9

It can be difficult to confess our sins because often we don't even want to admit that we have any sins to confess. But the commandments of God provide a very honest, if unflattering, mirror of our true selves. We sin every day in our thoughts, words and actions. To confess our sins to God is to admit that we have sinned, that we have rebelled against him. Yet out of his love for the world, God sent his Son Jesus to die for our sins, to suffer the penalty of death that we deserved. God didn't wait until we were good enough or tried hard enough. Scripture tells us "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). We have forgiveness, full and free, because Jesus paid the price for us.

**Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying on the cross
so that we can be forgiven. Amen.**



Joyful Noise

SING JOYFULLY TO THE LORD, ALL YOU LANDS;
BREAK INTO SONG; SING PRAISE.

Psalm 98:4

When a small fire erupted near a youth camp, firefighters extinguished the blaze and kept watch all night to make sure no sparks flared up. When the firefighters entered the dining hall the next morning, the campers and counselors rose up and gave them a round of heartfelt applause in thanks for saving the camp—and their lives. That is what we do in worship. We thank God for saving us as we offer up songs of praise for the gift of his Son, our Savior Jesus. Churches around the world use all kinds of instruments in worship—organs, violins, drums, trumpets, guitars, flutes—instruments that are pressed into service to lead our songs of praise. Scripture says, “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!” (Psalm 150:6). So take a deep breath and make a joyful noise.

**God and Savior, hear and accept our joyful songs
of praise and thanks. Amen.**



Offered

EACH MUST DO AS ALREADY DETERMINED,
WITHOUT SADNESS OR COMPULSION,
FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.

2 Corinthians 9:7

The complaint is sometimes heard in the parking lot after Mass: “All they want is my money. They always talk about raising funds.” At some point during a worship service, an offering is taken. Does God want or need our money? After all, he is God. He already has everything. Our offerings are a gift to God to be used for others. Some of the funds may be used in that particular place, to pay salaries and bills. Other parts of the offering may be used to help those in need, in the local community or across the world. The offerings are used, too, in sharing the good news of Jesus. Our offerings are a thanksgiving gift because, on the cross, our Savior offered up—not money—but his life, to win for us the rich gifts of forgiveness and eternal life.

**Lord, we give you our offerings in thanks
for all that you have given to us. Amen.**



Pray Like This

ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID TO HIM, “LORD, TEACH US
TO PRAY JUST AS JOHN TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES.”

Luke 11:1

Have you ever been in a situation in which you just didn't know what to say? Sometimes we may feel that way when we pray. What words are the right words? The right words are words of faith, spoken openly, freely to God, who as our loving Father eagerly waits to hear from us. We often use the words Jesus taught us in what we call the Lord's Prayer. Praising God's holy name, we ask that his will be done among us and that he would shield us from evil. We depend on him for “daily bread,” knowing that he will provide for our needs. We ask him to forgive us as we forgive; the forgiveness we have in Jesus must flow through us to others. With confidence we say, “Amen,” that is, “We know our prayer will be heard and answered!”

**Lord Jesus, thank you for teaching us to pray.
Your prayer is a pattern for all of our prayers. Amen.**



AS JESUS ONCE WELCOMED LITTLE CHILDREN, SO HE STILL WELCOMES US INTO HIS PRESENCE WHEN WE COME TO WORSHIP. He is present to feed us with his Word and with his body and blood. He listens as we bring our daily needs before him in prayer. Jesus goes with us as we

leave the worship service and go about our daily work. He wants to be with us and has, in fact, promised exactly that. Jesus said, "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The welcome of our weekly worship is a reminder of what is yet to come. When this age, this present world, does come to an end, Jesus will return to gather us to himself. He wants us to be where he is, and he will welcome us into his presence forever.

Welcome! *you belong*

What happens during Mass? What goes on inside these doors? You are welcome in this place because here God welcomes all of us into his presence. Like a good host, he feeds us and serves us and seeks to meet our every need. This little book of devotions is a gift for you. Welcome, in the name of Jesus!